**Growth Group Sermon Questions:**

**May 16th, 2021**

**The Seven Woes**

**Matthew 23:1-12.**

**Read Matthew 23:1-12.**

1. James 1:12 states, “*God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him*.” This verse suggests that God blesses those who preserve through testing and temptation for the sake of Jesus. With that said, what is the most difficult situation that you have endured? Looking back at this situation, where did you see God’s hand at work? Do you feel blessed after suffering through this difficult circumstance?
2. Jon mentioned that the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees referred to in Matthew 23, provide a portrait of people who go through the motions of following the law without love. Have you ever felt yourself going through the motions of religion without love? If so, how did God help to draw you back into following His ways through love?
3. Jon drew our attention to “7 Woes” that Jesus unpacks in Matthew 23 that will help us not to mirror the portrait of the religious teachers and leaders:
	1. *Sorrowful are the ones who are door hiders (Matthew 23:13)*.
	2. *Sorrowful are the ones who multiple door hiders (Matthew 23:15)*.
		1. The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, as hypocrites, are meant to show others the door to the Kingdom, but they block themselves and others from entering the door. There is no love for God and others in them because they are shutting the door for others.
			* How can we guard against becoming door hiders like the hypocritical religious leaders in Matthew 23?
		2. Jon stated that Jesus is the one who helps people enter the door of the Kingdom. This is the portrait we should aim to reflect.
			* How can we as a church seek to mirror Jesus in this way?

* 1. *Sorrowful are the ones who practice religion but neglect relationship (Matthew 23:16-22)*.
	2. *Sorrowful are the ones who do not love others (Matthew 23:23-24*).
		1. What are some practices we can engage in to help us grow in our love and affection(s) for God and others?
			+ **Leaders be sure to direct your group in a prayer that asks God to help your group to love God wholistically. Encourage your group to wait on the Lord in expectation of Him moving in their hearts and lives.**
		2. Jesus portrayed a life that loved justice, mercy, and faithfulness. How can we be a people who portray love for justice, mercy, and faithfulness to those in our spheres of influence?
	3. *Sorrowful are the ones who begin with outside while neglecting the inside (Matthew 23:25-26).*
	4. *Sorrowful are the ones who begin with the outside while neglecting the inside (Matthew 23:27-28).*
		1. Of late, what have you been ingesting spiritually? If you keep feeding on what you have been ingesting will it lead to you reflecting the portrait of Jesus?
	5. *Sorrowful are the ones who say one thing and do another (Matthew 23:29-31)*.
		1. Please pray the following prayer over your group, “*Oh God, we pray that you will do a work by your Holy Spirit within us. We pray that you will draw us towards the portrait of Jesus. Lord would please protect us, as a church and individuals, from the enemy who seeks to continually drag us towards the portrait of hypocrisy. Amen.*”